

In order to provide improved agriculture related weather information to the farmers, Ministry of Earth Sciences has proposed to set up integrated Agromet Advisory Service in the country. This will enable providing much improved weather based agricultural services at district levels in a more efficient and effective manner so as to benefit the farming community to the maximum possible extent.

(b) The entire scheme is planned for implementation in a phased manner during the Eleventh Five Year Plan period. The Ministry of Earth Sciences is giving a very high priority to the implementation of this proposal.

(c) During the first phase of the implementation of this project which is likely to commence during early part of Eleventh Five Year Plan, after obtaining the required approvals, action will be initiated for upgrading the basic infrastructure to provide improved services. This is likely to take about 2 years time.

(d) A detailed plan for modernization of observational system and forecasting system of the India Meteorological Department has been prepared.

(e) As a first priority, a comprehensive plan for a limited modernization of the department during next 2 years has been prepared. The agromet advisory will be extended upto district level.

Upgradation of facilities in higher education

*84. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Centre has written to the States lagging in higher education with a view to help them to upgrade these facilities;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what is the status of Orissa in the higher education survey that has been conducted for the purpose; and

(d) what is the action plan of Government to help Orissa in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) and (b) Minister of Human Resource Development has written to all States where admission seats in technical education courses per one lakh population is less than the national average of 68 for degree level courses and 31 for diploma level courses in the year 2006. Such States have been requested to initiate appropriate programmes during the Eleventh Five Year Plan for increasing the intake capacity in technical institutions. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has been advised to extend necessary support to such States in respect of degree level programmes.

(c) No such survey has been conducted.

(d) Does not arise.

New Mining Policy

***85. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL:** Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to put in place a New Mining Policy;

(b) if so, the salient features of the proposed policy;

(c) whether it is a fact that State Governments are not granting mining lease rights within the stipulated period; and

(d) if so, the steps Government propose to take to make it mandatory for State Governments to grant mining lease rights within the stipulated period?

THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) to (d) The delay in grant of mineral concessions by the State Governments is an issue for consideration which is being addressed in the National Mineral Policy 2007, under the consideration of Government.

Vocational training

***86. SHRI SANJAY RAUT:** Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to State:

(a) whether it is a fact that our vocational training lags far behind the